

“Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.” Heb. 13:20,21. “Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow.” 2 Sam. 23:5.

What is called the everlasting covenant here, is often called in Scripture the Covenant of Grace, which stands in sharp contrast to that Covenant of Works under which the vast majority of mankind swelters under the wrath of God. It is a matter of highest importance, and of greatest concern for all mortals to have a clear and a right understanding of that covenant under which they stand. We shall never come to understand our spiritual estate and condition, till we come to know under what covenant we are – i.e., Works or Grace. To wit:

“He is the Lord our God; his judgments are in all the earth. He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations. Which covenant he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac; and confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant.” (Psa. 105:7-10)

“But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.” (1 Cor. 11:28)

“But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory; for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.” (Gal. 4:23-25)

If we are under a covenant of works, our state is miserable; if we are under a covenant of grace, our state is happy. Remember that God deals with all men according to the covenant under which they stand. If we die under a covenant of works, we shall be certainly damned; if we die under a covenant of grace, we shall be certainly saved. Until we come to understand under what covenant we are, we shall never be able to put a right construction, a right interpretation, upon any of God’s actions, dealings, or dispensations towards us.

When we come to understand that we are under the Covenant of Grace, then we shall be able to put a sweet, a loving, and a favorable construction upon the sharpest, smartest, severest and most terrible dispensation of God, knowing that all flows from love, and shall work for our external, internal and eternal good, and for the advancement of God’s honor and glory in the world. To-wit: ***“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous, therefore, and repent.”*** Rev. 3:19. ***“Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, and said, Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither; the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.”*** Job 1:20-22.

“Again the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel; Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good.” Jer. 24:4,5. To-wit: ***“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purposes.”*** Rom. 8:28.

“Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.”
(Heb. 12:9-11)

“For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the THANKSGIVING of many redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.” (2 Cor. 4:15-18)

Beloved, we must be serious about such holy things – and we must be zealous. That all those of our generation may know from our conduct and our words – day by day – that Heaven and Hell are not matters to be trifled with, or passed over with a few careless thoughts. For It is most certain, that one of these days, soon, the entire population of this present evil world – all 6.8+ billion souls – will be in everlasting joy or torment. Beloved, the world is passing away, and the lust thereof; to wit: ***“And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”*** 1 Jn. 2:17.

Yes, the world is passing away, even as we speak. All the world’s pleasures, all the world’s honors, and all the world’s profits are fading and leaving the sons of men; eternity lies just ahead; God is just and jealous; His threatenings are true; the Great Day will be terrible; time runs on; earthly life is uncertain; mortal life is dangerous; the old preachers used to say, ***“If you die tomorrow, how unready are you!? With what terror will your soul go out of your body!”*** Isn’t it time to give diligent thought to exactly which covenant you stand in with God – The Covenant of Grace or The Covenant of Works? When we come to understand – God forbid! – that we are under a Covenant of Works then we shall know that there is wrath, and curses, and woes wrapped up in the most favorable dispensations, and in the greatest outward mercies and blessings that Christ confers upon us; to wit: ***“For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and THE PROSPERITY OF FOOLS SHALL DESTROY THEM.”*** Prov. 1:32. To-wit:

“And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you. If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the Lord of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, AND I WILL CURSE YOUR BLESSINGS; Yea I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart. Behold, I will corrupt your seed, and spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your solemn feasts; and one shall take you away with it. And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment to you, that my covenant might be with Levi, saith the Lord of hosts. My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name.” (Mal. 2:1-5)

“But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee; Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field. Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store. Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out. The Lord shall send upon thee cursing,

vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thy hand unto for to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly; because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken me.” (Deut. 28:15-20)

Beloved. With such dreadful language the Holy Ghost describes the true condition of divine damnation that attends every sinner with whom God deals under the Covenant of Works. And, comes now worse and more of it; to wit: ***“But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments; And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that YE BREAK MY COVENANT; I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart; and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies; they that hate you shall reign over you; and ye shall flee when none pursueth you. And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. And I will break the pride of your power; and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass; and your strength shall be spent in vain; for your land shall not yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits. And if ye walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me; I will bring seven times more plagues upon you according to your sins. I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, and destroy your cattle, and make you few in number; and your high ways shall be desolate. And if ye will not be reformed by me by these things, but will walk contrary unto me; Then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins. And I will bring a sword upon you, THAT SHALL AVENGE THE QUARREL OF MY COVENANT; and when ye are gathered together within your cities, I will send the pestilence among you; and ye shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy.” Lev. 26:14-25.***

Such as are under the Covenant of Works have the breach of that covenant to account for, they being the serpentine brood of a transgressing stock; but such as are under the Covenant of Grace shall never be tried by the law of works, because Christ, their surety, hath fulfilled it for them; to wit:

“Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.” (Acts 13:38-41)

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” (Rom. 8:1-4)

“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” (Gal. 4:4-6)

All such are under the Covenant of Grace – now and throughout eternity. But, all unbelievers, all Christless, graceless persons, are under the Covenant of Works, which they are never able SAFELY to live under, but which they are incessantly breaking, to their inescapable damnation, for ever.

The Covenant of Works curses and condemns the sinner; to wit: ***“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.” Gal. 3:10.*** Nor does the sinner under the curse of the law (i.e., the Covenant of Works) have any way to escape the curse of the broken and violated law and the consequent wrath of an outraged God; to wit: ***“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold (choke, suppress) the truth in unrighteousness.” Rom. 1:18.***

Moreover – (talk about worse and more of it) – suppose, hypothetically that it were possible, and that a man lived a sinless life up until the end, when, on his death bed, he slipped, and had one evil thought – thus and thereby breaking the Covenant of Works – would he not be guilty of all? Yes, under the express terms and conditions of the only covenant he had with the Almighty God; to wit:

“But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced (i.e., convicted) of the law as transgressors. FOR WHOSOEVER SHALL KEEP THE WHOLE LAW, AND YET OFFEND IN ONE POINT, HE IS GUILTY OF ALL.” (James 2:9,10)

Oh! Beloved. This is not the time to talk to me about JUSTICE, UNDER THE COVENANT OF WORKS. Please. Talk to me about MERCY, UNDER THE COVENANT OF GRACE. Talk to me about the Surety provided to me in the Covenant of Grace to pay my ruinous debt to Divine Justice – IN FULL; to wit: ***“He that is SURETY for a stranger shall smart”*** – (i.e., suffer pain) – ***“for it; and he that hateth suretiship is sure.” Prov. 11:15.***

Oh! Beloved (!). Was it not so with you, as, I trust, with me; and with all of God’s dear Elect people, upon a day. There we were, in debt to our eyeballs to outraged Justice, and not a dime to pay with. There came a plaintive wail from the depth of total despair; to wit: No man cared for my soul. And then One, in the Beauty of Holiness, stepped up to pay – and thereby satisfy – my horrendous debt – though He knew that He was perfectly sure, – certain, – to smart for it; to wit:

“Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief; when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, AND SHALL BE SATISFIED; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.” (Isa. 53:10,11)

These are but a few of the terms and conditions contained in the Covenant of Grace, and all of them flow to the eternal benefit of God’s Elect, and all of them redound to the eternal praise and honor and glory of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.

Take these two: ***“When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed.”*** That is, When suffering on the cross, the Savior saw each of His Elect. Amazing. Beautiful. And, ***“He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.”*** That is, While suffering travail on the cross, the Savior saw the entirety of the price He paid, and the entirety of the benefits He received for that price, and was satisfied with His bargain. How precious. In the height of His agony, He looked upon all of us Elect ones from the beginning of the world, and expressed His total satisfaction with each of us. The apple of His eye. A glorious church without spot or wrinkle. Fair as the moon; clear as the sun; and terrible as an army with banners. It’s all in the pages of the Covenant of Grace. Chained to his throne, a volume lies, with all the fates of men; with ev’ry angel’s form and size, drawn by th’ eternal pen.

I love you.

Amen.